

IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of the claims is as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a slot machine, said method comprising:

generating a first game result pursuant to a first game, by displaying a combination of symbols randomly selected from a first set of symbols, using circuitry within said slot machine;

displaying said first game result on a video screen of said slot machine;

if said first game result meets certain criteria, initiating a bonus game, said bonus game being other than a random selection of symbols by said circuitry so as not to be a version of said first game, said bonus game generating and displaying a bonus game result using said circuitry and displaying said bonus game result on said video screen,

said generating and displaying said first game result and said bonus game result being performed by the same hardware in said slot machine so as to require no additional hardware to generate and display said bonus game result; and

granting an award to a player based on said first game result and said bonus game result.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein said bonus game result is a bonus award for achieving a particular first game result.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein said bonus game result identifies an additional award paid to a player.

4. (Previously Presented) A slot machine comprising:
circuitry within said slot machine for generating a first game result pursuant to a first game, by displaying a combination of symbols randomly selected from a first set of symbols;
a video display screen on said slot machine for displaying said first game result; and

circuitry within said slot machine for initiating a bonus game, said bonus game being other than a random selection of symbols by said circuitry so as not to be a version of said first game, said bonus game generating and displaying a bonus game result, if said first game result meets certain criteria, and displaying said bonus game result on said video screen;

wherein generating and displaying said first game result and said bonus game result is performed by the same hardware in said slot machine so as to require no additional hardware to generate and display said bonus game result.

5. Cancelled

6. (Original) The machine of Claim 4 wherein said bonus game identifies an additional award to player.

7. (Previously Presented) The machine of Claim 4 wherein said first set of symbols represent playing cards.

8. (Previously Presented) The machine of Claim 4 wherein said first set of symbols are symbols on a video reel.

9. (Previously Presented) The machine of Claim 4 wherein said bonus game result comprises indicia that fills a grid pattern.

10. (Previously Presented) The machine of Claim 4 wherein said bonus game result comprises letters.

11. (Previously Presented) The machine of Claim 4 wherein said bonus game result comprises numbers.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said first set of symbols represents playing cards.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein first said set of symbols are symbols on a video reel.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said bonus game result comprises indicia that fills a grid pattern.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said bonus game result comprises letters.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said bonus game result comprises numbers.

17. (Previously Presented) A gaming method, comprising the acts of:
generating a first game, wherein a play in the first game comprises randomly generating a first game result;

associating a first particular game result with a win of the first game;

generating a bonus game, wherein the bonus game comprises non-randomly generating a bonus game result, and wherein non-randomly generating the bonus game result comprises associating a second particular first game result with generating a count value; and

associating exceeding a particular count value with a win of the bonus game.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17, wherein non-randomly generating the bonus game result comprises:

associating a bonus hit value with the second particular first game result; and

generating the count value by combining the bonus hit value with a common bonus counter value, wherein the common bonus counter value is associated with bonus hit values generated by one or more gaming machines in a system of linked gaming machines.

19. (Previously Presented) The method claim 17,k wherein non-randomly generating the bonus game result comprises:

associating a bonus hit value with the second particular first game result;

incrementing a hit counter value in a particular gaming machine; and

generating the count value by combining the bonus hit value, the hit counter value, and a common bonus counter value, wherein the common bonus counter value is associated with bonus hit values generated by one or more gaming machines in a system of linked gaming machines, and wherein the system of linked gaming machines comprises the particular gaming machine.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17 further comprising:

associating a bonus hit value with the second particular first game result;

incrementing a hit counter in a particular gaming machine;

generating a first count value by combining the bonus hit value with a common bonus counter value, wherein the common bonus counter value is associated with bonus hit values generated by one or more gaming machines in a system of linked gaming machines, wherein the system of linked gaming machines comprises the particular gaming machine; and

generating a second count value by combining the bonus hit value, the hit counter value, and a common bonus counter value, wherein the common bonus counter value is associated with bonus hit values generated by one or more gaming machines in the system of linked gaming machines, and wherein associating exceeding a particular count value with a win of the bonus game comprises exceeding the second particular count value;

wherein associating exceeding the particular count value with a win of the bonus game comprises the first count value exceeding a first particular count value or the second count value exceeding a second particular count value.

21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the generating and displaying a bonus game result is performed without requiring input from a player of the slot machine.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the generating and displaying a bonus game result is performed without requiring input from a player of the slot machine.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the generating a bonus game result is performed without requiring input from a player of the first game.

24. (Previously Presented) A method for playing a gaming apparatus, comprising the steps of:

generating a first game, wherein a play in the first game comprises randomly generating a first game result;

if the first game result matches a predetermined value, then initiating a bonus game, wherein said bonus game includes the steps of:

incrementing a count value;

determining if the count value exceeds a predetermined threshold;

generating and displaying a bonus game result associated with the count value;

and

awarding a win of the bonus game, if the count value exceeds the predetermined value,

wherein generating the first game result and generating and displaying the bonus game result are performed in the gaming apparatus so as to require no additional hardware to generate and display the bonus game result.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the step of incrementing a count value includes the steps of:

retrieving a previous count value;

adding a predetermined amount to the previous count value to generate an incremented count value; and

retaining the incremented count value.

26. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of:

resetting the count value to a predetermined amount if the win of the bonus game is awarded.

27. (Previously Presented) A networked gaming system comprising:

a plurality of gaming machines connected together;

a central counter coupled with each gaming machine; and

each gaming machine including:

circuitry configured to generate a first game result by displaying a randomly selected combination of symbols;

a video display screen for displaying the first game result;

an individual counter;

said circuitry configured to initiate a bonus game if said first game result matches a predetermined value, said bonus game being other than a random game, which increments the individual counter; and

said circuitry further configured to compare the sum of the individual counter and the central counter to a predetermined threshold and either award a bonus game win if the threshold is satisfied or increment the central counter if the threshold is not satisfied.

28. (Previously Presented) The networked gaming system according to claim 27, wherein the circuitry is further configured to perform the award of the bonus game win and the increment of the central counter without requiring input from a player of any of the gaming machines.